

Healthy Forest Reserve Program - Talking Points

- The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) was signed into law as part of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. The program is authorized to be carried out from 2004 through 2008 and will allow enrollment of up to two million acres.
- The program was established for the purpose of restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems to: 1) promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, 2) improve biodiversity, and 3) enhance carbon sequestration.
- The Secretary of Agriculture will carry out the HFRP in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce.
- There are three options for enrollment into the HFRP are: 1) a 10-year cost-share agreement, for which the landowner may receive 50 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation practices; 2) a 30-year easement, for which the landowner may receive 75 percent of the easement value of the enrolled land plus 75 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation practices; or 3) an easement of not more than 99 years, for which landowners may receive 100 percent of the easement value of the enrolled land plus 100 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation practices.
- To be eligible for enrollment, land must be private land which will restore, enhance, or measurably increase the likelihood of recovery of a threatened or endangered species; improve biological diversity; or increase carbon sequestration.
- Land enrolled in the HFRP must have a restoration plan. The cost effectiveness of each agreement or easement and associated restoration plans must maximize the environmental benefits per dollar expended.
- Restoration plans must have practices necessary to restore and enhance habitat for species listed as threatened or endangered or are candidates for the threatened or endangered species list.
- Technical assistance will be provided to help program participants in complying with the terms of restoration plans under the HFRP.
- Landowner protections will be made available to landowners enrolled in the HFRP who agree, for a specified period, to restore or improve their land for threatened or endangered species habitat. In exchange, they avoid future regulatory restrictions on the use of that land protected under the Endangered Species Act.